DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 272 UD 030 199

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TITLE SchoolGirls. Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap.
INSTITUTION American Association of Univ. Women, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-385-42575-9
PUB DATE Sep 94
NOTE 358p.
AVAILABLE FROM Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Anglo Americans; Beliefs; Body Image; Competence; Cultural Differences; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; *Females; Grade 8; *Personal Autonomy; *Self Concept; Self Esteem; Sex Differences; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; American Association of University Women; Latinas

ABSTRACT

A survey conducted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) polled 3,000 boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 15 years regarding their attitudes toward self, school, family, and friends. Results confirmed that the passage into adolescence is marked by a girl's loss of confidence in herself and her abilities. The AAUW discovered that the most dramatic gender gap in self-esteem is in the area of competence. The author spent a year with African-American, Latina, and Anglo-American eighth-grade girls in two California schools. Her behind-the-scenes look at their real lives confirms the AAUW findings. Her experiences show that the media and the educational system are shortchanging female adolescents. (Contains 194 references.) (SLD)

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